

MEETING SUMMARY

TRANS-LAKE WASHINGTON PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OVERLAKE MEDICAL CENTER ANNEX, BELLEVUE, WA APRIL 18, 2001 — 9:00 A.M. — 12:00 P.M.

INTRODUCTION, WELCOME, AND AGENDA REVIEW

Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to receive information about the proposed transportation demand management (TDM) package and discuss input to the Executive Committee regarding the proposed multi-modal alternatives. No changes were made to the agenda.

PROPOSED TDM PACKAGE

John Perlic, Parametrix, and Daryl Wendle, Parametrix, presented the proposed TDM package that would be associated with each of the multi-modal alternatives to determine performance for the second level screening. John Perlic introduced the rationale for the TDM program, the goals and objectives, and the characteristics of the SR 520 corridor. He noted that the rate of drive alone trips has been decreasing in Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland and Seattle, as a result of aggressive programs in accordance with the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Act. He emphasized that the TDM program would complement existing programs in the various jurisdictions, as well as target the commercial and non-commute trips.

Daryl Wendle reviewed the strategies of the proposed TDM program. Elements include vanpooling, public information and promotion, employer based programs, TDM-supportive land use, public/private incentives, and pricing.

There was discussion around several of the elements of the TDM elements. Points noted include:

- John Shadoff, WSDOT, stated that a six-county market study has been done for vanpooling. The study showed a potential market fourteen times greater than current use rates. A significant percentage is found on the east side, and this market could grow substantially. Len Newstrum stated that a fairly high percentage of vanpool demands are found in the demand for ferry crossings. When asked about whether vanpools could have a significant effect on the design for SR 520, John Shadoff stated that as a single program, it would not likely be able to affect the number of lanes for the design option, but when combined with transit and other programs, the effects will be noticeable.

- Employer based programs are assumed to be voluntary. Subsidies would be funded through a combination of tax credits and employer based costs. It was asked whether the tax losses or the costs to the employers would be included in the costs of such a program.
- Pricing could be very effective in reducing trips across the corridor.
- It was suggested that another column regarding the effectiveness estimate could be added, to show such items as person trips or vehicle trips. This would also help give context and perspective.
- It was also suggested that the peak hour data be looked at in addition to the daily data, and a potential comparison for cost-benefit analysis should be considered (e.g. a reduction in peak hour volume/\$100 million spent).
- A research and development strategy might be considered for TDM, rather than pursuing a particular set of options based on incomplete analysis of their effectiveness.
- The same TDM package will be used with each of the alternatives in second level screening in order to determine differences in effectiveness based on capital costs. The results of the modeling will give the committees an idea of the effectiveness and trip reduction numbers that are attached to each of the alternatives.
- John Shadoff stated that the I-405 Corridor Program is working with the same major categories and estimating the effectiveness of reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to determine achievable ranges.
- Specific pricing strategies should be delineated. This includes tolls, parking pricing, and land use restrictions.
- A question was raised about how the level of investment will relate to the effectiveness of program options. On a program level, the presentation of that level of investment will influence perceived effectiveness or cost of information itself. It will be necessary to understand specifically how each of the different options is being combined with those factors in mind. Tolls, for example, could appear result in different levels of effectiveness based on how the information is presented.
- Cost is not reflected in the effectiveness ranges. Carpools should be pursued as a low-capital cost strategy. Technology can be used to match people with carpools and people and drivers. Both vanpools and carpools can be made more flexible.
- Jeff Peacock, Parametrix, stated that he had some reservations about including pricing at this point, especially if it is included for some options and not others. Assumptions and what they mean will also take some time to get to agreement. He suggested that sensitivity tests on pricing be run outside of the alternatives and TDM packages, to get a sense of their effect. Terry Marpert, City of Redmond, stated that no matter what is done on the project, it will affect pricing and housing and business. The group should find the most effective balance of trade offs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Liebman, AMEC Earth and Environmental, spoke on behalf of a group supporting the pursuit of a submerged floating tunnel under Lake Washington as part of a solution for mobility across the lake. The group, which includes representatives of the American Underground Construction Association and the International Tunneling Association, understands the potential social and economic aspects of the selected option as well as the technical challenges of a submerged floating tunnel in the corridor. The group maintains that a submerged floating tunnel would meet the needs and interests of groups within the corridor, and is confident the technical challenges can be overcome. Mark invited the committee members to the next meeting of the group.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL ALTERNATIVES

Amy Grotefendt introduced the discussion to the multi-modal alternatives proposed by the project team. There are eight alternatives proposed to be carried forward into second-level screening. Input from both the Advisory and Technical Committees will be provided to the Executive Committee on April 25, 2001. The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the lead agencies on which multi-modal alternatives to be included in the second-level screening at that meeting. Each multi-modal alternative will be considered individually. Amy Grotefendt reviewed the comments received from the Advisory Committee meeting the day before:

1. Generally the committee felt that all eight suggested alternatives should move forward, with some changes to the assumptions for each.
2. There was discussion about the differences between alternatives 3 and 7, and 4 and 8.
3. Some committee members recommended creating two options for the Safety and Preservation alternative:
 - a. Safety and Preservation alternative with no assumptions on I-90.
 - b. Safety and Preservation alternative as presented to the committee.
4. There was a suggestion to drop all eight-lane options due to the impact of the alternative on natural resources and neighborhoods.
5. There was concern that the process is moving too fast to adequately evaluate the alternatives.

Comments from the Technical Committee, and a synopsis of discussion is included below.

1. Alternative 1 – No Action

- Capital costs need to be considered.

- All No Action alternative information needs to be presented in all the handouts on the project to: a) eliminate confusion between the no action and the Safety and Preservation alternatives; and b) for consistency under the EIS process, to show that there is no pre-decision being made.
- The 'status quo' wording is misleading – change to reflect the risks associated with no action, including possibility of catastrophic storm.
- Communicate realistic impression of timeframe in which the bridge will need to be replaced; 'immediate' replacement is not necessary. Jeff Peacock stated that the current analysis is on the 20-year horizon, and that the EIS will look to a 30-year horizon. Though it is structurally sound today, the cost of maintaining the bridge will be prohibitively expensive after a 20-25 year service life.

2. Alternative 2 – Safety and Preservation, I-90 HCT

- No specific points raised.

3. Alternative 3 – SR 520 HOV, I-90 HCT

- There may not be community support for HCT on I-90, and it should not be considered as part of alternative 3.
- Kim Becklund, City of Bellevue, stated that the ultimate goal for Bellevue is 2-way transit on I-90, eventually leading to HOV 3+. The possibility for HCT transit on I-90 is evolutionary, and will depend on the demand over time.
- Jeff Peacock stated that both the HCT on SR 520 and I-90 need to be analyzed to make the determination about which corridor should be used. If the preferable HCT crossing is determined in the next 2 – 3 months, then it may be possible for Sound Transit to amend its long range vision. If the preferable corridor is not chosen, then the question of how to analyze HCT in the EIS is raised.
- If HCT is not put on SR 520 during this process, then the eventual possibility of HCT on both corridors will never happen. If it is put on SR 520, then the possibility of HCT on both corridors remains.
- Don Billen, Sound Transit, stated that it is premature to eliminate HCT from any of these options, as it is necessary to have the comparative information the analysis produces to make a determination. As the work on the EIS continues, then the decision can be made to preserve the possibility of HCT in the corridor.
- The Bellevue Way intersection and its smooth operation is important to eastside traffic. Closing the 108th Street interchange and moving that traffic into Bellevue Way will disrupt that.

4. Alternative 4 - SR 520 HOV, GP, I-90 HCT

- No specific points raised.

5. Alternative 5 – SR 520 HOV, SR 520 HCT

- A suggestion was made to use the anticipated Seattle subway system, and convert it to BRT for that area, and use the same endpoints for the BRT to the subway. It is inappropriate for a Seattle system to be included in this project.
- How will the exclusivity of the BRT system be preserved to allow it to act like HCT? There was concern expressed that BRT is not really a rapid transit system, since the buses are mixed with surface traffic on either side of the lake. Don Billen stated that the team is trying to learn from modal analysis and maximizing analysis of each mode. The ability to share the HOV infrastructure of the highway alternatives depends on the successful management of the HOV lanes. Direct access to key activity centers has also been included, to allow the rapid transit routes to perform well.
- The travel time advantage of HCT might be lost if it is wrapped up in the HOV lanes.
- Rail based rapid transit systems would still need the ability to access stations. There would need to be a fairly complete system to allow for restricted ROW for buses.
- Don Billen noted that the HCT ridership differences across the lake in the two corridors were fairly minimal. It would not be prudent to build a system in the SR 520 corridor, and not take advantage of additional markets. Jeff Peacock stated that after determining the corridor for HCT, the EIS will back up and evaluate potential alignments again. The fixed guideway systems will be understood in terms of cost comparison, extra ridership, and enhanced reliability.

6. Alternative 6 - SR 520 HOV, GP, SR 520 HCT

- No specific points raised.

7. Alternative 7 – SR 520 HOV/BRT

- The wording ‘preserve capability to put HCT on I-90 in the future’ should be added to alternatives 7 and 8.

8. Alternative 8 – SR 520 HOV/BRT, GP

- No specific points raised.

General suggestions

Other suggestions were made through the course of the discussion and are summarized below.

- Include mitigation and enhancement information and acknowledgement with each of the alternatives.

- Susan Sanchez, City of Seattle, stated that impacts to local streets must be known in order to make comments on alternatives, and make decisions for second level screening. Les Rubstello, WSDOT, stated that the impacts will not be known until the interchange designs are more firm. Currently at Montlake, eight interchange options are being entertained. Jeff Peacock stated that it would be possible to meet with local jurisdictions regarding the local impacts at each interchange. Some of that information will be available by second level screening.
- Jeff Peacock stated that there will be a fairly good level of information on ramp termini and major intersections, but that he is not sure there will be enough information to determine a preferred alternative going into the EIS.
- Kim Becklund stated that analysis of general purpose lanes only was discussed at the March Executive Committee meeting, and it is not likely that this issue has been put to rest yet. It may be an opportunity for the project team to look at the performance of general purpose lanes only, to satisfy the desire to understand that aspect exclusively. Jeff Peacock stated that the last two discussions reaffirmed the original Trans-Lake Study process decision not to look at general purpose lanes only as an option.
- Employment levels for 2020 for Redmond, Bellevue, and Issaquah, may be underrepresented, which will affect travel demand forecasts.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Amy Grotefendt reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule. An all committee workshop will be held May 23, 2001, at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle. It will be the first of three all-committees workshops. The first will focus on community enhancement and modeling, the second on June 6 will focus on transportation/TDM findings and HCT technology assessment findings, and the third on June 13 will focus on environmental findings, cost opinions, and initial recommendations for the EIS alternatives. A decision on the EIS multi-modal alternatives is scheduled for June 27th by the Executive Committee, with another meeting scheduled for July 11 as needed.

MEETING HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- Highway Alternatives Modal Evaluation Transportation, Environmental and Cost Findings, report, April 10, 2001
- High Capacity Transit Modal Evaluation Transportation, Environmental and Cost Findings, report, April 10, 2001
- Draft TDM Element of Trans-Lake Multimodal Alternatives, presentation, April 2001
- Proposed Multi-Modal Alternatives, graphic, May 2001
- Proposed Alternatives for Multi-Modal Evaluation, draft matrix, March 13, 2001
- Response to Questions and Issues from Executive, Technical, and Advisory Committee Members, April 17, 2001

- Meeting schedule

Additional Handouts

- Open letter to the Trans-Lake Washington Project, from Mark Liebman et. al., regarding consideration of submerged floating tunnels

MEETING ATTENDEES

Technical Committee Members

| Present | Name | | Organization |
|----------------|-------------|----------|--|
| X | Arndt | Jim | City of Kirkland |
| X | Billen | Don | Sound Transit |
| | Bowman | Jennifer | Federal Transit Administration |
| | Brooks | Allyson | Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation |
| | Conrad | Richard | City of Mercer Island |
| | Cushman | King | Puget Sound Regional Council |
| X | Dewey | Peter | University of Washington |
| | Fisher | Larry | Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| X | Francis | Roy | King County Department of Transportation |
| | Gibbons | Tom | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| | Kennedy | Jack | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| | Kenny | Ann | Washington Department of Ecology |
| | Kircher | Dave | Puget Sound Clean Air Agency |
| | Leonard | Jim | Federal Highway Administration |
| X | Marpert | Terry | City of Redmond |
| X | Newstrum | Len | Town of Yarrow Point |
| | Rave | Krista | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| | Pratt | Austin | U.S. Coast Guard, 13 th District |
| X | Sanchez | Susan | City of Seattle |
| X | Schulze | Doug | City of Medina |
| | Sparrman | Goran | City of Bellevue |
| X | | | (Kim Becklund) |
| X | Sullivan | Maureen | WSDOT – NW Region |
| X | Teachout | Emily | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| X | Wasserman | Mitch | City of Clyde Hill |
| | Willis | Joe | Town of Hunts Point |

Other attendees

John DiPeter, Friends of the Monorail

Philip Gega, Seattle

Mark Liebman, Submerged Floating Tunnel Working Group

Project Team

Les Rubstello, WSDOT

Rob Fellows, WSDOT

Jeff Peacock, Parametrix

Cathy Strombom, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill

Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues

Paul Hezel, EnviroIssues

PJH